1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

621 Each local group, whatever its size, had at least one permanent leader. In the small groups of a few lodges he was an outstanding person of ability and influence to whom lesser relatives and friends looked for guidance. He was the focal point of organization in their lives. The organization of such groups, so far as can be determined, was markedly similar to that which was characteristic for the aboriginal groups of the Great Basin in the days preceding white contact, as summarized by Dr. Julian Steward.[13] In the larger bands the identity of the "extended family group" was submerged in the more embracing organization of the band, but not wholly lost. "Relatives tended to camp together." Whenever the band camp was moved, the same grouping of relatives tended to find its position in the new camp by establishing its location in relation to other "groups of relatives," so that the pattern of spacing within the camp retained a certain regularity. The large bands camped and functioned as units only during the summer season of dances and communal buffalo hunts. For a portion of the year the band was scattered and subdivided. Our data are not absolutely clear on this point, but the implication is that the break-up of the band was into the smaller "groups of relatives," including, of course, the families of friends drawn within the orbit of the group. The family headmen, of which there was one for each camp-group, were the *pásaibo*, or peace chiefs (to distinguish them from the war leaders) of the band. When the compound band was camping [623] and moving together as a unit it then contained several peace chiefs. On these occasions the peace chiefs appointed one of their number as leader for the season, with the remainder of the chiefs functioning as an advisory council for the group as a whole and at the same time maintaining their positions as family headmen to their own groups of followers.

THE ECONOMIC BASE[14]

238 It is usual to speak of the Comanches as a tribe of hunters. Insofar as they depended primarily on game for sustenance, this is true. But it is equally true, and usually overlooked, that they were just as definitely a pastoral people. Great herds of horses were accumulated. The most notable form of [422] wealth was in this form of chattel: horses were individually owned by both men and women.

Though the horse was not a primary source of food, stories and case

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[13] Julian Steward, *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 120, 1938).

[14] The description of the material culture of the Comanches is a subject for separate treatment. This section is intended to serve merely as an orientation to Comanche subsistence methods.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

Though the horse was not a primary source of food, stories and case histories reveal that horse meat was eaten on occasion and relished. In food-getting Comanche culture was basically a buffalo culture. [262]

As a beast of burden and as a means of personal transportation the horse had a fundamental value to the Comanche. In this respect the horse was a [492] capital good. But the single individual could not effectively utilize more than a dozen horses in his personal string for use in war and hunting.

Beyond this, horses were exceedingly acceptable as gifts and tokens of 431 esteem. As gifts given in reciprocity for services rendered and as fees to 422 medicine men, they served as an informal medium of exchange. As objects demandable in settlement of damage suits at law, they were a tangible form of material wealth endowed with legal and monetary significance.

In spite of all this, the great value of horses to the Comanche was a [554] fiduciary value of inflated worth as prestige tokens, a value rooted in socio-psychological rather than economic factors.

Though captured Mexican youths and children purchased from poverty- 233 stricken Shoshone Indians served as herdsmen, and the increase of herds 556 through selective breeding was practiced by the Comanches, the basic fac- [567] tor in the acquisition and retaining of a large herd was the military skill of the owners. Thus it is that the possession of horses figured in the prestige competition which so constantly and vigorously activated the life of the Comanche male.

The size of Comanche herds was immense. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Upon the count of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Antelope band alone surrendered one thousand five hundred horses to the United States at the time of the capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[17] A single Comanche, Big Fall By Tripping, is reputed among the Indians to have owned more than a thousand horses at one time.

The great communal hunts of the buffalo occurred during the summer 224 months after the seasonal moulting was done and hides were in their prime. This was the season for the in-gathering of the bands. Sporadic and uncontrolled hunting of buffalo occurred whenever they were available during other seasons.

The time of the hunt was determined in democratic assembly at which everybody was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders took the important part. The date for departure being set, the young and able-bodied men with their women left the main camp. Children and old persons remained behind. The expedition travelled light, taking very small and undecorated tipis and what weapons and tools were necessary.

[17] Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Annual Report, Washington, 1875), p. 273.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

PROPERTY, INHERITANCE AND CONTRACT

421 Among settled peoples with fixed property and diversified economics the institutions of land tenure, disposition and inheritance, the treatment of chattels and the obligations of contract make up the better half of the material about which law centers. Or, as Professor Radcliffe-Brown writes, "With us one of the most important aspects of succession is the transmission of property by inheritance." But the study of Comanche practice offers little of note on this phase of the subject. For as Radcliffe-Brown continues, "Yet in some of the simplest societies this is a matter of almost no significance at all. In an Australian tribe, for example, a man possesses a few weapons, tools, utensils, and personal ornaments, things of little value or permanence. On his death some of them may be destroyed, others may be distributed among his relatives and friends. But their disposal is of so little importance, unless in relation to ritual, that it is often difficult to find any rules of customary procedure."[1]

If this statement had been written for the Comanches, it could scarcely have been more apt.

LAND TENURE

423 The Comanches had no concept of land value. As herding hunters, land was a matter of unconcern for them, being held neither individually, jointly nor communally. One may merely speak of land as having been communally occupied. The possibility of dividing hunting grounds or seed patches by families as was donè among the northeastern Algonkians[2] was not considered, for as Schoolcraft wrote of the Comanches, "No dispute ever arises between the tribes (bands) with regard to their hunting grounds, the whole being held in common."[3] Within the tribe, therefore, land tenure was infer-
[648] tile soil for legal conflict. Trespass by persons of enemy tribes meant death, unless it was a woman whom they cared to take as a captive, or unless the warrior escaped by display of cunning or bravery. "Friendlies" could visit with impunity and partake of Comanche game without danger.

CHATTELS

● 422 Wealth for the Comanche centered largely in horses. The economics of horse ownership has been discussed above (pp. 14–15).

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[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession* (Iowa Law Review, Vol. XX), pp. 286 ff.

[2] F. G. Speck, *Family Hunting Territories* (Canadian Geological Survey, Memoir 70, 1915).

[3] Schoolcraft, *History of the Indian Tribes, etc.*, Vol. 2, p. 131.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

In addition to horses, woman must be placed largely in the category of property, for her legal disabilities and low status made her very much a chattel, first to her father and brother, later to her husband. The several facets of this problem have been repeatedly examined in preceding sections. 422 562

In addition, domesticated dogs must be included in the category of private property. They abounded, but were of little economic value or importance save as camp scavengers and to warn of prowling enemies. (Except the notorious Comanche canine, Mákutavai, whose name was on the agency roles for many years as that of an Indian. His owner drew double rations from the government on this ruse.) The number of dogs arose from the existence of a tabu against killing them. Because of their identification with Coyote, dogs are believed to possess some power. To kill one brings bad luck expecially to one's children. People without children trained some dogs as pets, babying them and nursing them like a child. When the band was moving camp, these people would put such dogs on a horse to ride. 422 231

The idea of liability for acts of animals did not exist. There was no recompense for a dog bite. Nor could damages be sought for injuries received from a kicking horse. A quick-tempered man, however, might kill the horse on the spot. In such event, informants said there would be no call for damages to compensate for the horse. So it was with a dog, owned by another person, which was killed in anger. Post Oak Jim thought that "something might have been done about it" if the dog had been given to the owner by a dead friend, but not if the dog had been raised by the owner himself. 672 231

Finally, in regard to food, principles of generosity placed a sort of public lien upon the game a Comanche hunter brought down. A man who returned to camp with meat was obliged to share it with all who came for some. He had to give the best part to his wife to take to her father. Other portions he gave to those who asked. "If a man won't give it away, they camp on him until he does." This means obligation. But performance was not always spontaneous or achieved. In a hard winter She Invites Her Relatives observed that some people moved out of the camp so that they would not have to share their food with the others. Any persons who came upon a hunter and his game could claim any quarter by touching it. If there were enough claimants, the only part going to the slayer was the hide. The hunter asserted his right to this by seizing the tail. How similar this rings to Eskimo practice! The obligation seems here more than mere generosity; "They would camp on him." Generosity based on ethics appears rather in the buffalo hunt, a communal venture with a prospectively full supply, where the slain brutes were individually claimed. There young men were taught to kill a fat cow or two for the old men, who would even make 574 224

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

574 224 special request for a certain animal before the active hunters rode into the slaughter.

422 Objects of material culture were personally owned; but the test of ownership was not production so much as use. Clothing was prepared and made by the women, but owned by the person who wore it. A robe made by a woman for herself was hers, while a robe made for her son or husband belonged to that worthy. Tools and utensils used by the women belonged to the women and were also made by them. Every warrior carried his own kit of tools for the making of bows and arrows. This kit was an indispensable part of his personal equipment and was always carried fastened to his body, so that no matter what the emergency he was prepared to equip himself with weapons. Some older men specialized in arrow-making. They gave arrows to petitioners with or without consideration. Each man marked his own arrows with distinctive feathers or by some characteristic of production. Women made saddles for themselves and held them as their own [492] property. The man's saddle, which was of a slightly different style, was [438] owned by the men. Among the Comanches they were made by Mexican [721] captives who specialized in the trade for pay.

422 424 438 Medicine paraphernalia were made by the owner according to his vision directions. If the help of others was needed, they received no pay other than food. The medicine formula was privately owned, but could be transferred in consideration of payment, or given as gift, or inherited. The power itself, however, had to come through a dream as a confirmation of the efficacy of the transfer. War honors were another very distinct form of incorporeal property. These could be transferred as a gift of high esteem, as has been described. They were not, however, articles of trade in economic exchange.

422 586 The tipi, which was made, erected and moved by the woman, was not hers by proprietary right. The decision as to its disposal belonged to the husband, though if generous and well-disposed towards her, he frequently gave it to the wife on separation.

422 Throughout the simple catalogue of goods we find that articles of personal use were usually personally owned according to the principle of effective utilization.

INHERITANCE

428 768 In the disposal of a deceased's property there is but one rule which stood out with constancy: *upon the death of a person all effects of his (or her) personal usage were destroyed.* This included clothing, weapons, saddles, tools, paraphernalia, and horses customarily ridden by the deceased. According to Neighbors, "They also killed their favorite wives, but this custom has

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

feet to a post. Two men grabbed the hind legs, and the operator sat between the legs to do his cutting.[24]

Comanche horses were not ordinarily shod, but a man's favorite horse, if tenderfooted, was fitted with a rawhide boot soaked in water and tied over the sore hoofs.[25] Other riding horses had their hoofs toughened by walking them slowly back and forth near the heat and smoke of a fire.[26]

Among the Comanches, horses were private property. Each member of a family who was large enough to ride had one or more mounts of his own. The young child was usually given an old, gentle mare. The women had their riding mounts as well as mules and gentle horses for packing. Large numbers of mules were frequently found in the Comanche camps around the middle of the nineteenth century. Captives, before they were adopted into the tribe, were also forced to ride mules to lessen the danger of a break for freedom.

Josiah Gregg was of the opinion that the Comanches had a universal custom of marking their animals by a slit in the tip of each ear.[27] Contemporary Comanches deny this, however, saying that any Comanche could distinguish one horse from another by looks just as easily as he could tell one person from another. After all, the Comanches lived with their horses.

Most accounts by early explorers on the plains agree that the Comanches were among the best horsemen the world has produced. Baldwin Möllhausen, a German scientist and traveler who crossed the Southern Plains in 1853, observed that from earliest childhood to the last days of his life the Comanche was continually on horseback. "Indeed, he makes but an awkward figure enough on foot, though he is no sooner mounted than he is transformed; and when with no other aid than that of the rein and heavy whip he makes his horse perform the most incredible feats," which gave him a feeling of independence and superiority.[28] Marcy stated that it was while the Co-

[24] Informant: Post Oak Jim.
[25] Informant: Slope.
[26] H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races*, I, 518, n.136; Parker, *op cit.*, 203.
[27] Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 433.
[28] Möllhausen, *op. cit.*, I, 184.

Government and Law

Among settled peoples with fixed property and diversified economics, the institution of land tenure, the disposition and inheritance of property, the treatment of chattels, and the obligations of contract form the most important aspects of civil law. Yet among the Comanches these had almost no significance. The Comanches had no concept of land value. As herding hunters, land was a matter of unconcern for them, being held neither individually, jointly, nor communally. One may speak of their country as being merely communally occupied. There are no records of any disputes between the bands over hunting grounds. The external boundaries of the Comanchería were not firmly fixed, but vaguely felt. Allies and friends were welcome to hunt and visit, but other outsiders entered on peril of their lives.

Wealth for the Comanches centered largely in horses, as has already been shown; horses were individually owned by both men and women. They were acceptable as a medium of exchange and could be used as payment of obligations in damage suits. Women, too, might be listed in the category of chattel property—first of father and brother and later of husband. Dogs must also be included under the heading of private property. They abounded, but after the acquisition of the horse had little economic value or importance save as camp scavengers and sentries. The idea of liability for the acts of animals did not exist. There was no recompense for a dog bite; nor could damages be collected for injuries received from a kicking horse.

The Comanches owned a number of captives who were chattel property until adopted as brothers by their owners if they were boys or married by their captors if they were girls. There were a few personal slaves held by blood covenant by individual warriors. They were generally captives, Mexicans forming the bulk of the number. A blood ceremony, according to Josiah Gregg, was performed with blood taken from a vein on the back of the captive's hand or arm. The ceremony was repeated whenever ownership of the slave changed. The slave had the right of life, food, and protection, since no one dared molest the property of another, and the owner could sell or transfer him at any time to whomever he chose.[25] There are indications that the Comanches captured and sold slaves merely as articles

[25] Gregg, *op. cit.*, 434.

The Comanches

567 of trade, and poverty-stricken Shoshones often sold their children to
● [422] their more prosperous Comanche cognates.

641 Some captives became naturalized, free members of the tribe, even
[727] respected warriors. The changed status was recognized by a solemn ceremony only after the Comanches felt they ran no risk by such a step. According to the customary procedure, the pipe was passed around the council circle. After smoking, all stood up, each placing his right hand over the heart, then raising it toward the sun, repeating the process while marching around the circle. Then the captive was led before the chief to take the oath, wherein he promised faithfully to perform all the duties of a Comanche warrior, to help provide for, protect, and obey the chief in all things in both peace and war. The person taking the oath was then given a Comanche name and was required to select a family and be adopted by a brother.

Objects of material culture were personally owned, but the test
422 of ownership was not production so much as use. Clothing was made,
424 for example, by the women, but was owned by the person who wore it. The medicine formula was privately owned, but could be transferred. War honors were a sort of property which might on occasion be transferred, but rather as a mark of esteem and not for economic consideration. Objects jointly used, like the tipi, were usually considered to be the property of the husband.

428 At the time the Comanches were confined upon the reservation, their practices in regard to inheritance were in a chaotic condition. Apparently the whole problem of inheritance was so new to their culture that no established norms had evolved. The Plateau tribes from whom the Comanches had separated themselves when they entered the plains were accustomed to destroy all a man's property at his death. This included clothing, weapons, saddles, tools, war paraphernalia, and horses customarily ridden by the deceased, and in ancient times even the wife. In the early days, the Comanches also sometimes killed the favorite wives of a deceased warrior. Articles of intimate personal use were buried with the corpse; other less important articles were burned. This destruction entailed few hardships and no serious economic loss, since the property was limited to clothing and a few weapons and utensils. When the Comanches acquired horses, inheritance became a serious problem. To slaughter the entire

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

When he heard of the move and the plan, Horseback, a Comanche Chief of distinction, complained that he did "not think the agent has good sense."[21] Horseback's judgment was sound. The Comanches, wanting neither to farm nor to live among the Kiowas, refused to congregate near the new agency site. Since they refused to move near the agency, they were left largely to their wits. Their grass-fed teams were too small and too weak to break the tough prairie sod near Fort Sill. As a result, they made very little progress in agricultural pursuits until after the reservation had been opened to white settlement and a younger generation had learned something of farming and stock-raising in school.

Agent Hunt realized the futility of attempting to make farmers of the Comanches and advocated that they be made stock-raisers, but he made little progress in his efforts and successive agents adhered to the policy of making farmers of them. During the years preceding the innovation of grass leasing, a few Comanches were persuaded to take up farming to better their economic condition. When Agent Day collected grass-lease rentals, he used part of the money to encourage farming. Agent Day reported that in 1892 the Indians of the reservation cultivated 5,000 acres and the agency an additional 500; that of the 800 acres of sod broken during the year, all but 60 had been broken by the Indians; that the 3,782 Indians on the reservation owned 10,000 horses, 300 mules, 25,000 cattle, 3,000 swine, and 75 sheep and goats; and that agricultural products marketed by the Indians during the year amounted to $3,550.25.[22] The accuracy of the agent's statistics is subject to question. Some of the livestock probably belonged to white ranchers who were clever enough to get free grass on the reservation. In 1910 the agent estimated that two per cent of the Indian population were stockmen, each owning from 10 to 50 head of cattle. At the same time he reported that there were some 600 Indian farmers on the reservation, approximately 15 per cent of the

21. Nye, op. cit., 325.
22. Day, op. cit.

20: Wallace H-4,5 - (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

population, cultivating 15,000 acres in tracts ranging from 5 to 160 acres.[23] 657 241

Progress continued at about the same pace. In 1929 the crops were valued at $400,000, the agricultural implements and vehicles at $600,000, and the livestock at $286,000, and the Indian Office was urging the unemployed to refrain from leasing any land that they could utilize profitably.[24] The lower values reported for agriculture during the next few years represent the effects of the depression rather than a retrogression. In 1942 the income from agriculture was approximately $600,000. 657 241 433 [422] [458] [434]

The principal crops include cotton, wheat, corn, alfalfa, oats, and sorghum. Cotton, with an average annual yield of about 150 pounds of lint per acre, has been the leading cash crop. The Washita and Red River bottoms are well adapted to corn, producing an average of thirty bushels an acre. Grain sorghums thrive on the uplands and are utilized as feed for livestock. Wheat, grown on the level and rolling plains, averages about twelve bushels an acre. The pasture land has been over-grazed and in 1945 had a carrying capacity of only one cow to seven acres. 241 248 433 243 433 [246] 233 433

The Extension Service has rendered valuable assistance to the farmers. The older Indians are not interested, but the younger land owners are accepting its services. The Extension farm program has supervised and instructed the Indians in handling livestock, the preparation of the soil, the varieties of crops to plant, and methods of crop cultivation. It supervised the terracing of 18,646 acres of land in 1935. Farmers who terraced received concrete or masonry dams without cost.[25] 657 241

Credit and rehabilitation have been another phase of the Extension Service program. The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1936 made federal loans available to worthy Indians engaged in farming. By June, 1945, a total of 331 loans amount- 657 241 426

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23. Superintendent Kiowa-Comanche Agency, Annual Report, September 1, 1918. [113]
24. Bustis, op. cit., sec. II, 18-18, 20, 22.
25. Superintendent W. B. McCown, Annual Report: Narrative Section, 1935 (MS, Agency Office, Anadarko), 17-18. [113]

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

to hear the echoes, and one boy asked his mother to make him a bed in the fireplace that he might look up the chimney at the stars. Only 27 Comanche families were living in houses in 1886, and in 1901 the majority of the 3,713 Indians of the reservation lived in tents, tipis, and in small boxed houses along the streams. Water was obtained from running streams and bedding was filthy; there were no screens on the houses, no toilets, and no effort was made to have clean, wholesome food.

After allotments were made, home building increased rapidly. The Indians received payment for their ceded lands and realized that they must cease to wander. White neighbors soon had homes on the tracts they had taken and this stimulated a desire on the part of some families to imitate. It has been stated previously that whites who leased Indian lands for a five-year period were required to erect and leave a three-room house on each allotment. Each year new houses went up; in 1930 twenty-one were built at an average cost of $1,636.22. By that time 90 per cent of the Indian families had good frame homes with sanitary toilets and other outbuildings.[28]

The homes compare to an advantage with the rural homes of white neighbors. Superintendent Buntin in his 1930 report estimated that the value of home furniture averaged slightly more than $300. A few Comanche homes presently are large and clean, are beautifully carpeted and furnished, and have running water, gas, electricity, and occasionally a good library. Since 1930 few families have lived in tipis or tents. But partly due to the depression and later war-time restrictions and partly due to the increasing number of landless heirs, home construction has not kept pace with the increase in the number of families. Since young married couples no longer have land and lease-money, they tend to live with parents.

The Extension Service has sought to improve the standards of home life. It enrolled 525 new members in Indian wo-

28. Buntin, *op. cit.*, *ms.* II, 59, 15.

24: Richardson H-4 (no date) 1929 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1854-1859) Texas

both reservations by storm. But sufficient forces were not forthcoming and the "Army of Defense," as the frontiersmen had called themselves, disbanded for a time. Their fury was allayed somewhat by the act of the governor in appointing a board of commissioners to visit the camp of the citizens and endeavor to work out a peaceful method of attaining their ends. The commission visited the frontier communities, heard the complaints of the angry citizens and in their report of findings quite naturally declared the Indians guilty of the offenses charged.[42] But Baylor and other frontier leaders kept up the agitation and, in order to prevent another gathering, G. B. Erath, one of the governor's commissioners, called out a special force of one hundred militiamen from McLellan and Bell counties in order to assure the citizens that the Indians were being watched.[43] However, from all accounts it seems that the frontiersmen did not propose to leave to others the matter of watching the Indians and during the last few weeks preceding the removal the Indians of both reservations were harassed on every hand and dared not leave their agencies to gather up their animals, many of which were out on the range. On one occasion a fight occurred near the Comanche reservation in which both the Indians and citizens suffered some injuries.

Authority for the immediate removal of the Indians was finally granted on June 11 and on July 31, the Indians from both reservations, escorted by United States soldiers started on their journey to the valley of the Washita in Indian Territory.

The census made at the time the journey was begun showed that 1112 Indians left the Brazos reservation and 384 Comanches left the upper reservation. It was estimated that the Comanches took away with them live stock worth $9,550, and that they lost, or were forced to leave behind, live stock worth in the aggregate of $14,922.50.[44] The cost of both reservations to the United States Government had ranged between $61,655.25, for 1857, and

42. Report of John Henry Brown, G. B. Erath, J. M. Steiner, J. M. Smith and Richard Coke, to Governor Runnels, Waco, June 27, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, pp. 665-671.

43. Erath to Ross and Neighbors, June 20, 1859. Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 2, p. 669.

44. Neighbors' Memorandum, no date. Ms. University of Texas photostat copy.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

595 462 went about her tasks cheerfully and willingly. Whichever one of the women divided the labor reserved enough for herself so that she was just as busy as the other women.

857 462 The little girls of the family stayed close to the women the day through, and performed tasks suitable for their ages. But the little boys roamed far and wide, never seeming to have any duties except when they were helping their father with the horses.

521 522 462 [296] [124] During group tasks there was always quite a bit of conversation and considerable laughing. In warm weather the women would go to the creek together, select a place in the shade where the water was about six or eight inches deep, and sit in the water on the sandy bottom to do the family wash. I never learned what the talk and laughter were about, as I was never able to accumulate a squaw vocabulary.

521 562 604 124 [198] (Comanche women held only the most necessary conversation with any man, Indian or white, other than their own menfolks. And while I was generally able to figure out the subject of the men's conversation and follow its progress, I seldom recognized a word used by the women when they conversed among themselves. At times I was inclined to think they even had a different language.)

595 The same air of camaraderie seemed to prevail whenever the wives were together in a group. I noticed it in the store whenever there was only one family present. Their trading done, the wives would draw 516 [353] their chairs into a group and converse. They never had chairs in their camps, but the women never passed up the several chairs we had in the store—although once in a while some quite old squaw would insist on sitting on the floor. If the chairs were all occupied, the women never hesitated to sit on the floor, and the people trading would walk around them.

595 Wherever you saw a man's wives—in town, on the reservation, or at a celebration—they always formed a group. You would not find one wife in a store and another out on the street. Two or more groups of wives would often chat together in the store or sit together in the shade on the reservation or at a powwow.

595 422 294 One custom which seemed odd to me was that of each wife's having her own sewing machine. The sewing done by the average family was not so extensive that one machine would not easily have sufficed. Yet each wife would have her own—something I had been alerted to look for by an article that had appeared in the *Star* commenting that each of Quanah Parker's wives had her individual sewing machine.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

000 The incident that made Wer-que-yah stand out as an individual, instead of only another Indian customer, concerned my horse. I bought this horse to replace the little Oregon mare I sold when we came to Oklahoma. I had purchased her for $9.00 from a herd of wild Oregon horses shipped to our Kansas county seat. I bought my Oklahoma horse in the winter, and he hadn't been well cared for. I turned him out on the claim and grained him each night and morning when I fed the little mules. We drove the mules, hitched to a hack, to the claim each night after we closed the store and back to town in the morning.

When the grass came lush and green in the spring, the horse lost interest in his grain and seldom came to the barn. I hadn't seen him close up for some days, when I finally decided to bring him to town. He scarcely resembled the animal I had turned out. He had shed his winter coat, and his bay hair was as shiny as though it had been oiled and polished. A roached mane was all he needed to be ready for a show ring.

And wonder of wonders, the ticks were gone along with the winter coat. There must have been something in the green grass to cause the ticks to drop. The Texas cattle tick was the bane of all livestock. Control by dipping was many years away. I don't believe there was any relief from tick infection at the time. At least, I inquired but learned of none. Cattle brought in from the north and exposed to the ticks often died quickly.

231 After bringing my horse to town, I found he carried a brand,
● 422 which his winter coat had hidden. As brands go, it was dainty. It was small in design, and the burning surface of the branding iron was narrow. I asked a number of people, but none of them knew the brand. One day when Wer-que-yah was buying supplies, I drew the design of the brand on a paper sack and showed it to him.

Becoming quite excited, he struck himself in the chest several times with the inside of his closed fist, exclaiming, "Me. Brother. Me. Brother." I assumed he meant it was his brother's brand. When I told him I had a horse carrying the brand, he lost all interest in buying supplies.

231 The horse was staked about two hundred yards from the store, and we went at once. While some distance from the horse, the Indian appeared to recognize him and began smiling and talking to him. He never bothered to step around where he could see the brand. He put

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

his right arm around the horse's nose and his left arm over its head, 231
pulling the head down. All the time he was standing there hugging the horse's head, he was murmuring what sounded like Comanche baby talk.

After a little while, he took his right arm from around the horse's nose and broke out with a stream of excited talk. Mostly it was Comanche, but some was English when he had the words. Then he took his left arm down and added some sign language.

While this was going on, my horse stood quietly. From the moment the Indian first spoke to him, the horse had directed his attention to him, ignoring me completely. It has always been in my mind that the horse recognized the Indian about as quickly as the Indian recognized the horse.

I doubt if I understood more than 25 percent of what Wer-que- [124]
yah was telling me, and his son, Enoch, wasn't there to interpret. He hadn't seen the horse for five, maybe so six, years. I wondered if he hadn't owned an interest in the horse at one time, or perhaps owned an interest in the brand. The horse had been raced as a two- and three-year-old. Heap fast.

Then the horse ran into a wire fence. The Indian showed me a scar denoting a bad wire cut on the left shoulder, well down toward the leg. This was something else the winter coat had hidden completely, and I hadn't noticed it. Thinking the horse was ruined as a race horse, they had sold it.

The brother lived north of the Wichita Mountains—the sale had been made during reservations days, before the allotment and homesteading. Now here was the horse, well south of the mountains. I am sure my Indian friend thought it little short of a miracle.

I rode the horse to Wer-que-yah's home many times, and to his camp on the reservation when it was Grass Money time. There he would be camped with hundreds of other Indian families for the semi-annual payment. But I don't remember a time he missed petting the horse's head and giving it a bit of Comanche baby talk.

The older Comanches contended that they needed a brand on their 422
horses only as a safeguard from white horse thieves. They claimed to 231
know every horse they owned, whether one or a hundred, and were able to go into a herd and pick out their horses, regardless of how many there were in the herd.

Someway, somehow, this Indian knew a horse he hadn't seen 231